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JPRS L/10657

14 JULY 1982

West Europe Report

(FOUO 43/82)



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ECONOMIC

FRANCE

SOCIALIST CGT MEMBER SAYS AUROUX LAW IS 'REAL PROGRESS'

Paris LE POINT in French 17-23 May 82 pp 60-61

[Interview with Gerard Gaume (CGT) by LE POINT: "Rights Which Go in the Right Direction"; date and place not specified]

[Text] Gerard Gaume, 37, a socialist and a member of the confederal bureau of the CGT answers LE POINT's questions on the proposed Auroux law.

LE POINT: Won't the new workers' rights be mainly new rights for trade unions?

Gerard Gaume: It is a mistake to contrast trade union rights and workers' rights. Because who, if not organized labor, has the means to make sure the rights of the workers are respected? When we speak of strengthening trade union rights that does not mean strengthening the organization itself, but rather placing it in the service of the workers.

[Question] Just the same. Does the CGT seem to be turning up its nose at these proposals?

[Answer] No. On the whole they go in the right direction. They constitute a real step forward. They also call for other major steps. For example, the monthly trade union information hour for wage earners. It has just been adopted for state employees. It ought to be the rule everywhere. We also want to abolish interior rules at the workplace, because they are a weapon allowing the most complete arbitrariness on the part of management. We had also hoped for the creation of trade union locals operating in more than one workplace. Actually, in small and middle-sized businesses and industries, the lower limit of 50 workers very often prohibits the creation of a trade union local with full rights. In our opinion, it is not acceptable that 5 or 6 million workers are in this way completely deprived of trade union representation.

[Question] You are calling for freedom of speech on political matters at the work place. Is it really up to a trade union to propose such a right?

[Answer] We are merely adopting the stand of the prime minister on the "new citizenship." All the rights and freedoms which accompany citizenship must be

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able to be exercised at the workplace. This means, of course, a certain number of rules, but free speech on political matters is part, in our opinion, of the whole range of basic freedoms.

[Question] Doesn't all that justify the fears of turning the workplace into a permanent forum?

[Answer] On the contrary. We even believe that the worker's right to free speech is necessary in today's economy. Some people in management have understood this very well. But they use the workers' right to free speech only for the purpose of improving efficiency. We, on the other hand, want workers to speak out on all the problems they are facing: on working conditions or the introduction of new techniques, but also in case of economic problems in the workplace. That is why, for example, we are calling for a right to suspensive appeal for the workplace committee in the matter of dismissals.

[Question] You mean veto power?

[Answer] Not at all. The CGT, contrary to what we are told, has never asked for veto power, which might lead to a situation of blockage. We only want, instead of unilateral and irrevocable decisions, to allow the search for better solutions. For us, economic progress and social progress are not in opposition, but they strengthen each other and influence each other.

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ECONOMIC

FRANCE

ROLE, GOALS OF NATIONALIZATION IN BANK, SAVINGS REFORM

Paris L'EXPRESS in French 16-22 Apr 82 pp 78-83

[Article by Agnes Rebattet: "Investments: What Is Going To Change"]

[Text] After decentralization, audiovisuals, and the work week, it is savings' turn to be the object of government concern. The socialist government wants to completely rechannel the 400 billion francs put aside by households every year. According to a L'EXPRESS-PUBLIMETRIE-ACTUALITES survey, six out of every ten Frenchmen will be affected by this reform.

Jacques Delors, minister of economy and finance, has asked an expert committee, chaired by David Dautresme, president of Credit du Nord, to submit proposals to him. There are two priorities: promote long-term savings, to be used for sounder financing of the economy and the budget deficit; and, redistribute to the less fortunate the government tax credits for savers. This is a real puzzler: obviously it is the wealthier French people who contribute the most to savings. They might reduce their savings if they are going to be penalized. Prospects of a great political debate! In tinkering with savings, the government is running up against well-rooted habits and is jeopardizing the advantages to be obtained. The elimination of anonymity in gold transactions, the new regulations governing time-deposit accounts, and the possibility of taxing works of art have all been stormy issues since the Left took power. It will be no different with the new measures. Rene Monory, former minister of economy, has already taken up the banner, through the Defense-Savings Association (40,000 members), and has labeled the socialist government's philosophy "inquisitorial."

Francois Mitterrand, during his presidential campaign, pledged to protect the savings of moderate-income families against inflation. This has been done. The National Assembly has just agreed to create a People's Savings Booklet (LEP) indexed on inflation. Under this measure, 11 million households, those who pay less than 1,000 francs in taxes each year, can protect their savings--albeit modestly, since the ceiling is limited to 10,000 francs--against monetary erosion, provided they do not touch those savings for 6 months.

Is this "pink" booklet revolutionary? It is more of a token gesture. What do these 30 billion francs--according to the most optimistic estimates--that the banking system could thus collect actually represent? Barely 6 percent of the gigantic sums invested on the A booklets of the savings banks.

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After the appetizers comes the main course: the Dautresme report to be submitted to Jacques Delors and Laurent Fabius, minister of the budget this weekend. This document will not be made public before the end of the month, which gives the ministers time to digest its 200 pages.

It has taken 6 months of meetings, with three sessions a week, not counting the working weekends, for these "experts" to measure the impact of possible changes and to work out, in order, all the advantages and catastrophes that any change in taxes on investments could trigger. After the first noble flights of fancy, the encounter with reality was particularly painful. "You cannot imagine how many tiring and stormy technical meetings we have had," reported a member of the committee. Most of the major tension actually arose from technical aspects.

Should we or should we not abolish the anonymity of bonds? Treasury bills and bonds of savings banks and Credit agricole account for nearly 200 billion francs. They are anonymous, with 5-year maturities, and enjoy a 42-percent tax deduction [prelevement fiscal liberatoire]. Who are their privileged customers? Merchants, small shop owners and farmers, income brackets that are frequently opaque for the tax authorities. A praiseworthy effort to raise morale, but who is going to profit from it? Elimination of anonymity in gold transactions decided in October 1981 has already caused capital flights. All the same, the yellow metal can be stored indefinitely. What will happen to the money recovered when the bonds mature? Will it be stashed away in cash? Will it be spent or invested elsewhere? The reform of the time-deposit system, which has affected the trifling amount of 100 billion francs, shows that it is impossible to make predictions. It would be better to increase taxes on anonymous investments than to eliminate them, the specialists maintain.

A Gigantic Plumbing System

The second item of controversy among the experts is the possibility of replacing tax exemption based on the type of investment by deductions computed on the basis of income. According to the EXPRESS-PULIMETRIE survey, 40 percent of savers are opposed to a measure of this sort. Nevertheless, a certain number of tax incentives have been diverted from their purpose over the years. Since 1950, hundreds of thousands of prosperous merchants, physicians, attorneys and business executives have, for instance, made excellent real estate deals--either by buying their homes for the price of rent, or by purchasing apartments as investments. The rental income has repaid their loans, the Treasury has paid interest to boot, in the form of a tax deduction, and, finally, monetary erosion has assured comfortable profits. A questionable system: the wealthier one is, the easier it is to borrow, and the more one borrows, the richer one becomes. Moreover, the circle is completed with the rise in credit rates and in real estate prices (see Marie-Laure de Leotard's article).

The Dautresme committee quickly realized that one thing was essential: "we must be sure that we do not break the pipes of savings, this gigantic plumbing system where leaks are particularly difficult to stop," one of the participants in the committee acknowledged. There is nothing fiercer, more fleeting, or more easily traumatized than a saver.

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"You will remember how horrible the liabilities were that the generations following World War I passed on to their heirs, after the Russian loans or the Panama Canal bonds collapsed," a stock broker recounted. So be cautious! The French Government once again is confronted with the same needs and the same difficulties as its predecessors. Where is it going to find the money and how can it get its hands on it? Hunting down money has become an increasingly difficult task. The French people are no longer--unfortunately--"the Japanese are savings." A 1-percent variation in the savings rate represents more or less 20 billion francs. The savings rate declined from 18 to 25 percent between 1974 and 1981. For the past year, 30 percent of households have pared their savings, according to the L'EXPRESS-PUBLIMETRIE survey. There are two reasons for this.

--The purchasing power. Because of the unemployment crisis, it has grown only slightly or is stagnant. So to maintain their consumption patterns, many families would rather "draw" on their savings.

--The flight from money. Anticipating price increases, individuals are stepping up their buying, even though it means getting further into debt than usual. This explains to a great extent the predilection of the French toward "disposable" or liquid savings.

Forty-four million French people have the famous "A" savings booklet from Ecureuil or the P.T.T., and 6 million have the "blue" booklet from credit mutuel. These three networks were handling more than 570 billion francs, or 38 percent of French savings, as of 31 December 1981. The preference for cash holdings is only increasing: one out of two French people questioned by PUBLIMETRIE stated that preference today.

The savings banks, which are the great beneficiaries of this movement, are not rejoicing. They are worried about the effect of the pink booklet on the "A" booklet and are afraid that the latter will eventually disappear.

In fact, the report on "banking reform" submitted by Jean-Michel Bloch-Laine to Jacques Delors in the beginning of March recommends that the amounts deposited on the "A" booklet be frozen at their current level (49,600 francs). This is tantamount to condemning it to a slow death, because of monetary erosion. According to the Socialists, if an 8.5 percent interest rate net of taxes is not enough for a saver whose "A" booklet represents his only savings, it is far too much for "well-off" citizens who use the booklets as remunerative bank accounts. Unfortunately, this line of reasoning runs up against a sizeable, technical obstacle, namely that the resources collected by the "A" booklet are channeled through the Deposit and Consignment Office, which uses them to inexpensively finance local governments and low-cost housing. They also have ardent defenders. Thus Francois Mitterrand cautiously assured: "The existence of the "A" booklet will not be jeopardized." In saying this, he contradicted his Economy Minister, Jacques Delors, who had to make amends: "I never intended to condemn the "A" booklet to euthanasia," he told the National Assembly on 6 April.

Bloch-Laine wanted to redirect a good part of the billions of francs invested at very short term toward longer-term, but better protected investments. He did not count on psychological obstacles. Whatever the investments that make

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up the galaxy of savings, the "A" booklet remains the center pin. It accompanies the Frenchmen from birth to death. Parents deposit the first token franc in the child's booklet. This is the beginning of the process of accumulating wealth. When the nest egg becomes sizeable, the Frenchman will try to buy a home, and when his basic needs have been met, at about the age of 50, he will begin to think about financial savings. These savings, including stocks, bonds and other common investment paper, account for only 4 percent of total savings. "It would be stupid to disregard this basic motivation. It would be better to use it to maintain and possibly increase households' savings," an expert from the Savings Research and Study Center (CREP) commented.

The Dautresme committee wants to promote the bond market. Nationalizations have already changed shareholders into holders of liabilities (subject to compensation). The exchange began on 13 April. "It is therefore out of the question to try to change the current financial system, which is very favorable," an exchange broker explained. It seems instead that the government is trying to encourage a movement: investments in bonds have doubled in the past 3 years, a result of interest rate trends. In January 1980, government bonds issued at 12 percent were called historic. Since then, interest rates have taken off, and bonds have exceeded 16 or even 17 percent, with the result that business executives, administrative personnel, and prosperous independents (including members of the professions and merchants) have been seduced by the high return--without seeing that the constant rise of interest rates was devaluating their capital. Nearly 5 percent of households currently hold bonds, and the figure will be about 7 percent by 1984. New types of variable rate securities indexed on the money market or on the rate of new issues now protect them against bad surprises. A 17 percent return, accompanied by tax incentives, yields 12 to 13 percent net of taxes (a 3,000 franc interest deduction on the income tax return, and a prelevement libératoire [standard?] deduction of up to 25 percent). "If banks were to make a reasonable effort to inform the public, there would be a new clientele of savers interested in bonds," according to a stock exchange source. A considerable potential market.

A new product, "the retirement savings account," could also make capital roll in. This account would make it possible to invest long-term capital, an ideal supplement to a retirement which is regarded by many as very uncertain. This should be particularly popular among executives and middle-management staff, who are very worried about the future of their retirement systems. The rapporteur of the Dautresme committee, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, an economics professor at Parix-X Nanterre, has just published a book on the subject of "Savings and Retirement." It would appear that his conclusions have been followed. It is obviously out of the question for the government to guarantee purchasing power during a time of rising interest rates. This would be disastrous for the entire country. But it can protect retirement capital more effectively than the present arrangements. Life insurance programs in fact have two major disadvantages.

--Taxes and charges of insurance companies considerable reduce the rates offered.

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--Financial mechanisms, such as redistributed profits and indexing on the AGIRC points, cannot make up for the impact of monetary erosion.

A Big Unknown

Strauss-Kahn advocates two stages: the first would be a relatively long period of savings managed by bankers, who are considered better able to obtain return on capital; and, the second stage, involving payment of an annuity, would be the responsibility of the insurers.

All governments have dreamed of reforming savings for a long time. These dreams have been reflected in the creation of many committees and the publication of dozens of reports, in the good French tradition. This provides a great opportunity each time for pressure groups, bankers, real estate promoters and other agents of change to doggedly defend their interests. The result is that instead of being selective, tax incentives have been accumulated. Therefore, attempts to rechannel household savings, such as Rene Monory's idea to channel them toward high-risk investments (stocks), have been semivictorious. This time the government has a solid trump card: with the nationalization of the banking sector, it has a firm grip on the reins of the savings network. Will it succeed here where others have failed?

Everything will depend on a big unknown: the reform of the entire financial system scheduled for next fall. And, to be sure, the rate of increase in prices.

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POLITICAL

FRANCE

ROCARD ON PLANNING REFORM, ECONOMIC POLICY

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 12-18 Jun 82 pp 43, 44

Interview with Michel Rocard, minister of state for economic planning and development, by Franz-Olivier Giesbert: "What I Lack"; date and place not given

Text Before presenting his reforms to the National Assembly, the minister for planning explains why more than laws is needed to bring real change to a country.

Question We have heard practically nothing from you since May 10. Are you that happy in your closet?

Answer I am working to get French planning underway again. That is a big job. Where is the closet?

Question It is your ministry. Not everyone in the government is your friend. Have you not, in the end, done a disservice to the plan by taking charge of it?

Answer That question should be asked of others. In this country, the problem with the plan is the political authority for it. In 35 years of planning it has not been possible to solve it. But degeneration of the plan could well be explained in a period of expansion. Not so now. In France we really plan only in time of crisis, and the crisis is here.

Question Everyone talks of rigor these days. You should be happy. Are we moving, despite denials, toward a Barreism of the left?

Answer Barreism is of the right by definition. That doctrine neglects individuals by focusing solely on a body of abstract figures. That being said, it is true that methods of management must be redefined more strictly: first, because the international crisis is worsening ...

Question You are not telling us you are just now discovering that!

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Answer Not me. Some few, here and there, may have taken longer than necessary to realize that the world is in crisis. A part of the left had fallen behind in that respect. But I think the last eyes are opening. That is why the time seems to have come for socialist rigor, that is, for balance between economic lucidity and social imagination.

Question In starting to preach it, is not the PS by way of becoming Rocardian, as was said by Claude Evin, chairman of the social affairs committee of the National Assembly?

Answer Concerning rigor, my problem is that action should follow words. This country will get sick from paying more attention than to action. For me, politics is what is done, not what is said.

Question You are liked or disliked, but you are generally considered one of the left's best experts. Frankly, then, do you approve the government's economic policy?

Answer We are searching for tools that will enable us to get out of the crisis, and they will not be found in our classics, for economic science is silent on that. That is why we have a duty to be imaginative--and at times I wonder if we are not a bit short of that quality. When he launched the New Deal in the United States, President Roosevelt broke with the whole economic intelligentsia of his time. That was in 1932. Four years later appeared a book by a certain John Maynard Keynes: "General Theory of Interest, Employment, and Money." He gave coherent statement to what Roosevelt, with great pragmatism, had attempted with success. "The only thing we have to fear," said Roosevelt, "is fear itself." I am not afraid. If we run a risk, in fact, it is that the necessary preservation of our major financial balances may cut off our chances of growth. In time, a currency always ultimately reflects the productivity of the economy which issues it.

Question Most indicators are bad today. Is not the economy taking its revenge?

Answer From the first, our priority has been to combat unemployment. It means personal suffering for the jobless, and also a loss of substance for the national community. To check it, we wished to apply two measures: first, a better distribution of work. But French society showed us that its whole life was based on personal or corporate egoism. It put defense of the purchasing power of wage earners before solidarity with those who have no job. Whence the limited results of the courageous policy of working hours reduction;

The second measure: growth, the creator of jobs. It is naturally difficult to have growth at a time when all our partners are in recession. That was bound to cause imbalances. We knew, for example, that it would be our balance of payments which would begin to pay the bill for growth. It was mechanical, inevitable. To prevent a falling-off of foreign trade, it was

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thus necessary to reconquer the domestic market, while economizing on imported energy.

Question But the government has obstructed energy economies.

Answer The effort does not in fact match the provisions of the interim plan developed by the government last year.*

Question Does that not prove that the plan really counts for little?

Answer The two-year interim plan was written very quickly, when industrial policy was not yet defined. And we are only just beginning to carry it out. But it is true that the plan is first of all a matter of determination. I find that in the importance the two great majority parties have always attached to planning. In 1977 I even reminded the PS that the market retains a regulatory role. I was, in a word, a lucid planner. I have remained so. And yet it is not always easy, today, to do as much as I would like ...

Question What do you lack? Financial resources?

Answer More than that! In 1946 the country was in ruins. It had lost nine tenths of its locomotives and a third of its bridges. Jean Monnet's first plan set a few priorities. He had no financial resources, but his intellectual authority was such that he was followed without question. Our ninth plan stakes everything on the same response.

Question What do you expect from the planning reform you are about to present to the National Assembly?

Answer First, that it will sanction the political authority for the plan. Then, that it will set up the procedures which will regulate relationships between the state and all other planning agencies, from trade unions to large enterprises, and including associations. What in fact differentiates the right from the left is sharing of responsibilities. For our part, we share them.

Question Will you share them when drastic measures become necessary--such as cutting into health expenditures, for example?

Answer That will indeed be necessary. Health expenditures increase two to three times faster than our production. The solution is not to amputate social guarantees, but to change our thinking and behavior in matters of health. In France we are too much in the habit of judging the effectiveness of prescriptions by their length, and we often stay longer in hospital than necessary. The French could in fact have the same quality of medical services at less cost. But for that, there must be set up a new medical

*"Le Plan Interiminaire 1981-1982" has just been published by Flammarion, with a preface by Michel Rocard.

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education, better preventive medicine, and also a system of home medical services. What will settle the question of our social service deficits is neither decrees nor laws, but a long-term policy with participation by all concerned.

Question Is it true that you were not invited to a meeting between those responsible for the government's economic policy and the PS leaders?

Answer If that meeting had taken place, and because it was to bring up economic strategy, it would have been indeed strange, to say the least, if the minister of planning did not participate. But it did not occur.

Question When you write your memoirs, will they contain surprising things concerning this period?

Answer That is quite possible, and it would be amusing. But I do not have a diarist's temperament. Action is what interests me. Francois Mitterand's septennate must be a great success. That is what I work for, with strictness and loyalty, after my fashion.

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POLITICAL

FRANCE

CANTONAL ELECTIONS: PSF FAILS TO BENEFIT FROM PCF LOSSES

Paris PROJET in French May 82 pp 598-608

[Article by Alain Lancelot: "Cantonal Elections: a Beating"]

[Text] On 17 January, four districts which had been barely won in June 1981 by four socialist deputies returned in the first round to four deputies from the opposition, two of whom were ex-ministers in the Giscard d'Estaing government (Messrs J. Dominati and A. Peyrefitte). This victory has been interpreted in different ways. Some were inclined to minimize it by considering local conditions in the districts in question which, according to Mr Defferre "do not reflect the general opinion among the French people": "As far as we are concerned, this is a warning rather than a failure. One should not overreact," concluded Mr Mermaz. On the other hand, the opposition leaders interpreted it as "a splendid victory" (Mr Chirac), or "The beginning of something whose end-result is certain" (Mr Giscard d'Estaing). On both sides, the next cantonal elections were eagerly anticipated.

The results are just in, and apparently without ambiguity: although the leftist majority was understandably reluctant to admit defeat in the first round, they had to recognize the extent of the "warning" on the eve of the second round. A warning which is all the more difficult to ignore than in the past, cantonal elections have rarely been so extensively politicized.

This was partly because of the socialist party, which was anxious to "confirm the change" and the government whose ministers, starting with the prime minister, expended unbounded energy, but also because of the opposition where Mr Chirac was everywhere at once and Mr Giscard d'Estaing was making a noisily discreet comeback at Chamalieres. Watching all the "stars" on their TV screens, the voters could easily forget they were involved at the district level and believe they had gone 1 year back in time. With one difference: the absence of Mr Mitterrand, who demonstrated his political flair by staying out of the debates.

Even if the results of the two rounds seemed to result in a beating for the majority, the president is not directly concerned and is in a position to draw some lessons. But what lessons? A careful examination of the two rounds should help make it clear.

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First Round: 14 March 1982

The first round involved 2,029 districts: 1945 in France itself, 167 of which were created as a means of correcting some unbalanced demographic situations, and 84 in overseas territories, 14 of them in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. Most of these districts are in the series which was renewed in 1976.

The table on the next page, based on statistical data from the Ministry of the Interior shows the results for France itself.

The main tendencies are shown in the following table:

	% Voting			% Registered		
	1976	1982	spread	1976	1982	spread
Extreme left	0.7	0.6	-0.1	0.5	0.4	-0.1
PC	22.8	15.9	-6.9	14.5	10.5	-4.0
PS + Left Radicals	29.0	31.6	+2.6	18.4	21.1	+2.7
Total Left	52.5	48.1	-4.4	33.4	32.0	-1.4
Miscellaneous left	4	1.6	-2.4	2.5	1	-1.5
Total left extended	56.5	49.7	-6.8	35.9	33.0	-2.9
Ecologists	-	0.4	+0.4	-	0.3	+0.3
Gaullists	10.6	17.9	+7.3	6.8	11.9	+5.1
Center and Right	32.9	32	-0.9	20.9	21.2	+0.3
Total Right	43.5	49.9	+6.4	27.7	33.1	+5.4

The verdict is clear: the left in power lost the first round of the cantonal elections they had won by a wide margin 6 years before when they were in the opposition. This defeat is too definite to be explained away the way it was on the eve of the elections: the loss of ground by the left does not result from an incorrect counting of the "miscellaneous left" in the opposition, and can only be explained by a failure in rounding up voters as shown by the results as a percentage of registered voters. The following table puts into light the main point: the loss of ground by the communists, and the gain by the Gaullist opposition. Let us review these various points.

1. 1976 (1801 districts)
2. 1982 (1945 districts)
3. Difference
4. Number of candidates

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5. % of Registered voting
6. Number of candidates
7. % of Registered voting
8. % of registered voters
9. % of votes
10. Registered voters
11. votes
12. Abstentions
13. Valid votes
14. Far Left
15. Communist Party
16. Socialist Party
17. Left Radicals
18. Miscellaneous Left
19. Ecologists
20. UDR/RPR
21. UDF
22. Miscellaneous Right
23. Far Right
24. Independents

The Problem of the Miscellaneous Left

The cantonal elections, which involve small electoral districts and favor rural France, are strongly personalized elections where many candidates do not belong to a party. In the last 15 years, because of the effect of the "majority nationalization" in French political life, the number of "miscellaneous" or "independent" candidates have grown regularly smaller. The statistics drawn up by succeeding ministers of the interior have probably speeded up this move. Past ministers were excellent at finding "moderates favorable to the majority." The present minister claims all the "miscellaneous left." This game must not be taken too seriously: since statistics no longer include any "miscellaneous" candidates, it is inevitable that some moderates not related to a party wind up among the miscellaneous left or the miscellaneous right. From calculations by the newspaper LE MONDE only two-thirds of the 1982 miscellaneous left votes (1.03 out of 1.6 percent) can be counted in the present majority.

Rounding Up Voters

Electoral participation, stimulated by the new local stakes created by decentralization and the national aspect resulting from a very lively political campaign, was exceptionally high. There have never been so few abstentions under the Fifth Republic. March 1982 confirms the tendency toward this point of view: the nationalization and politization of local elections bring them ever closer to national elections.

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Percentage of Abstentions

Series renewed in 1979	1961	1967	1973	1979
	43,5	42,6	46,6	34,6
Series renewed in 1982	1964	1970	1976	1982
	43,3	38,2	34,6	31,6

The Failure of the Left

As compared to 1976, the left, including the miscellaneous left, lost almost 7 percent points of the valid votes and the left proper lost almost 4.5 points. As compared to the 1979 cantonal elections which concerned the other half of France, the loss of ground is about the same: 5.5 points for the extended left, and a little more than 4 for the left proper. If one agrees to compare things that are not directly comparable, we can leave the cantonal elections and compare the results from March 82 to the National elections of 1981.

Percentage of the Left Proper	1981 Presidential elec. 1st round	1981 Presidential elec. 2nd round	1981 Legislative 1st round	1982 cantonal 1st round
With respect to registered voters	40	43,8	38,6	32
With respect to votes cast	47.3	52,2	55,2	48,1

As a percentage of votes cast, the improvements of 10 May, and even more so of June, disappear: the left is almost brought back to its level of 26 April 1981. As a percentage of registered voters, the comparison is even less flattering considering the differences in participation.

The Communist Loss of Ground

The 15.9 percent of the PC are located between the 15.5 percent of G. Marchais in the presidential elections, and the 16.1 percent obtained by the party in the legislative elections: the loss of ground is therefore confirmed, and is even worse in as much as for the last 10 years, the cantonal elections had been the most favorable elections to the communist party. This loss of ground obviously varies depending upon local situations, but it concerns urban domains of the PC as well as rural areas, thus providing a poor forecast for the 1983 municipal elections. The communists, who hoped to gain a new dignity by participating in the government have been duped: their participation makes them party to a government whose successes are slow in coming and keeps them from gathering unhappy voters in their fold. They are attempting to escape this contradiction by letting the CGT (Confederation Generale du Travail) agitate itself on the social scene, but they are rather adding to the bad feeling: the party continues to scare its adversaries, and its allies who are trying to keep it on the edge, without really mobilizing its forces in the working

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class. Its dallying, not to say more, in the face of the situation in Poland, topped the whole thing and caused a feeling of reject from national sensitivity. Overly Stalinian in its demagogue aspects, the Communist Party gives the impression of drifting without direction. Voters as well as militants have noticed this and the Party runs the risk of progressively following the fate of the diplodocus who also had a body that was too big for such a small head.

The Confirmation of the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party can rightly claim to be the "first party of France." Its progression compared to 1976 is marked (+3.3 percent of valid votes) and even compared to 1979 (+2.9 percent). Part of its progression, however, is due to an increase in the number of socialist candidates: 1,859 in 1982 (95.6 percent of the districts) compared to 1,562 (86.7 percent of the districts) in 1976. This increase is also a partial explanation for the decrease of the "miscellaneous left" and, perhaps, some losses of the left radicals. This is equivalent to saying that the PS's failure to gain from the communist losses is even more important than it seems.

The Push by the Opposition to the Benefit of the RPR

The cantonal elections are traditionally favorable to moderate grouping who more or less maintain their position at the national level (-0.9 percent of valid votes and +0.3 percent of registered voters) by becoming somewhat politicized: the part of the UDF increases to the detriment of the independents and miscellaneous right. But the 1982 vote has been marked on the right by a progression of the RPR (+7.3 percent of valid votes cast). Jacques Chirac's party is undoubtedly benefiting from the dynamism of its leader who has had almost no competition from the opposition since May 1981, and it is also benefiting from a policy which leads to a multiplication of candidates: the RPR, which presented 853 candidates in 1982, is present in 43.9 percent of the districts whereas the UDR presented only 501 in 1976 and was only present in 27.8 percent of the districts. Overall, the two major parties of the opposition who went united into combat* met with comparable success (17.9 percent of valid votes for the 853 RPR candidates and 18.8 percent for the 900 UDF candidates), as if voters had wanted to show that under prevailing conditions, they cared less about what separates them than about what unites them against the majority.

The Voters' Itinerary Through a Case Study

It is not possible, from a study of overall results, to find out where the communist votes went. The study can refute the thesis of a mass abstention which is not compatible with the increase in participation between 1976 and 1982, but it does not allow a decision between two contradictory hypotheses: a mass transfer to the PS along with a slide to the right of center voters who were previously allied to the socialists, or a sharing of votes between the PS and the opposition. In order to try to clarify this, I have examined more closely

*By presenting single candidates in about 1,500 districts

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the results in a department of the Paris area where the leftist push had previously been strong and where the loss of ground has been very definite: the Department of the Essonne.

Between 1976 and 1982, the evolution of the votes has been as follows in the 18 renewed districts:

	Difference In Actual Numbers	% of Registered Voters		% of Valid Votes	
		1976	1982	1976	1982
Registered	+36,246	100	100		
Voting	+20,910			100	100
Far Left	+ 328	1	1	1,5	1,5
PC	-12.534	20,5	13,9	31,8	21,8
PS	+12.235	14,9	17,1	23,1	26,9
MRG	- 789	0,4	0,1	0,7	0,2
Misc. Left	- 8,732	3,4	0,1	5,2	0,2
Ecologists	- 3.221	-	1,1	-	1,7
Center and Left	+27.181	24,3	30,4	37,7	47,7

Apparently, communist losses are almost exactly balanced by socialist gains. But this apparent explanation disappears as soon as one goes into detail for the 18 districts: the communist losses are rather better explained by the gains of the opposition rather than those of the PS. It is clear that the PS has only occasionally benefited from the communist losses; in most districts, it only picked up a fraction of the votes, often definitely less than half. The right has also certainly not gained entirely from the communist losses, but its progress seems more related to the communist losses than the socialist progress.

Available statistics allow a comparison between the results of the cantonal elections and those from the 1981 legislative elections in 16 districts and the presidential elections in 7 districts. These comparisons are instructive.

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Evolution of the votes between 1976 and 1982 in 16 districts of the Essonne

	1976 Cantonal Elections		1981 Legislative Elections		1982 Presidential Elections	
		%		%		%
Registered	240,600	100	262,933	100	270.799	100
Far Left	2,265	0,9	3.350	1,3	2.438	0,9
PC	49.627	20,6	42.917	16,3	37.701	13,9
PS	35.019	14,6	62.683	23,8	46.401	17,1
MRG	989	0,4	-	-	394	0,2
Total Left	87.900	36,5	108.950	41,4	86.934	32,1
Misc. Left	9.030	3,8	955	0,4	298	0,1
Ecologists	-	-	6,612	2,5	2.625	1
Center and Right	57.702	24	70.137	26,7	81.918	30,3

The Socialist Party has therefore certainly progressed in these 16 districts in comparison to 1976, but it lost a quarter of the votes from June 1981 while the haemorrhage of communist votes continues. In this case, as confirmed by the analysis on a per district basis, a switch from the PC to the right is very likely even if it seems less "logical" than successive slides from the PC to the PS and from the PS to the right. This is because this "logic" ignores the fact that unhappy PC voters are also often voters who have been disappointed by the government and have been repelled by the socialist pretention to lord it over everything. By voting for the right, these voters are expressing their unhappiness by adopting a punitive behavior. The use of data from the presidential election, which was only possible for 7 districts, does not contradict this move. It can be seen on the following table that the left, and particularly the noncommunist left, has not recovered its spring 1981 level whereas the right has recovered part of the loss experienced in June.

Evolution of the Votes Between 1976 and 1982 in 7 Districts of the Essonne

	1976 Cantonal Elections	1981 Presidential Elections		1981 Legislative Elections	1982 Cantonal Elections
		1st round	2nd round	1st round	1st round
Far Left	0,8	2,8		1,3	0,8
PC	22,6	14,4		17,1	16,4

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	1976 Cantonal Elections	1981 Presidential Elections		1981 Legislative Elections	1982 Cantonal Elections
		1st round	2nd round	1st round	1st round
PS	13,6	20,8		21,8	15,7
MRG	0,3	2,2		-	-
Total Left	37,3	40,2	46,4	40,2	32,9
Misc. Left	-	-		0,3	0,2
Ecologists	-	4		2,1	1
Center and Right	25,7	35,3	36,1	25,5	28,2

Certainly, France cannot be equated to the Essonne and these partial results cannot be extrapolated. But a careful examination of the results on a per district basis gives me the feeling that they are sufficiently representative of what actually happened on 14 March 1982. The results from the second round confirm this impression.

Second Round: 21 March 1982

The second round concerned 1,063 districts, 1,036 in France proper, where 909 of the 1,945 seats were filled in the first round (46.7 percent). In these 1,036 districts, 2,115 candidates were contending: in 985 cases (95 percent) the contention was a duel generally opposing a candidate from the left to a candidate from the opposition.

From the statistics of the Ministry of the Interior published in the press and that I have arranged into the two major groups to make them more significant, the results for France proper are as follows:

1,036 Districts Undecided After the First Round

	1st round			2nd round		
Registered	11,078.722	100		11.047.037	100	
Votes cast	7.446.858	67,2		7.760.126	70,2	
Abstentions	3.631.864	32,8	%	3.286.911	29,8	%
Valid Votes	7.234.753	65,3	100	7.519.948	68,1	100
Left	3,786.719	34,2	52,3	3.797.540	34,4	50,5

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	1st round			2nd round		
			%			%
Misc. Left	133.660	1,2	1,8	104.516	0,9	1,4
Ecologists	40.043	0,4	0,6	522	-	-
Center and Right	3.274.331	29,5	45,3	3.617.370	32,8	48,1

Overall, the left strictly speaking gains 10,821 votes and the opposition 343,039, taking full advantage, and more, of the extra 285,195 votes cast in the second round.

These overall results conceal the divergence of evolution depending upon whether the PC or the PS is representing the left in the second round. As a general rule, vote changes are not in favor of communist candidates, whereas they are more often in favor of socialist candidates. This was again verified in the Essonne.

Evolution of the Votes From one Round to the Next in March 1982 in the Essonne

	PC in the Second Round (8 Districts)			PS in the Second Round (9 Districts)		
	1st Round	2nd Round	Differ- ence	1st Round	2nd Round	Differ- ence
Valid votes	91.615	93.654	+2.039	88.574	95.985	+7.411
Left	51.698	48.561	-3.137	40.088	45.134	+5.046
Ecologists	1.876	-	-1.876	1.345	-	-1.345
Center and Right	38.041	45.093	+7.052	47.141	50.851	+3.710

In some cases, the communist loss of ground is impressive, as in Agde, in the department of Herault, where the communist deputy-mayor of Beziers, Paul Balmigere, was beaten by 565 votes in the second round whereas the left was ahead by 1,634 votes after the first round results.

With respect to these communist failures, R. Barrillon lists in LE MONDE a dozen cases where the communist lack of discipline hurt the socialists. Even if this does not reflect a general situation, it certainly shows a degradation of the "Union of the Left."

The Seats

According to the Ministry of the Interior, the results of the election in France proper are as follows:

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	Up for Reelection	Elected	Difference
Far Left	2	1	- 1
PC	236	191	- 45
PS	511	504	- 7
MRG	88	61	- 27
Total Left	837	757	- 80
Misc. Left	61	41	- 20
RFR	179	323	+144
UDF	389	460	+ 71
Misc. Right	311	363	+ 52
Far Right	1	1	-
Total Right	880	1,147	+267
Total	1,778	1,945	+167

No party of the leftist majority comes out ahead whereas all the opposition families progress more or less strongly. The mechanism of the majority vote has amplified this motion but did not create it. Although the concept of national majority has little meaning in the case of cantonal elections, it can be noted that the opposition (without any miscellaneous left) gathered 6,532,466 votes out of 12,683,746 votes cast, or 51.5 percent in the deciding round (the first in 909 cases and the second in the other 1,036). In the 1978 legislative elections which they won, they had only gathered 51.1 percent.

General Council Presidents

Presented as a "third round" of the cantonal elections, the election of the General Council Presidents now has a particular significance since decentralization makes these presidents the executive power at the department level. Overall the left, who hoped to acquire the majority, lost eight presidencies to the opposition in France proper.

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	Situation Before the Vote	Situation Before the Vote	Net Result
PC	5	3 (1)	-2
PS	30	28	-2
MRG	9	5 (1)	-4
	44	36	-8
Center	38	46 (2)	+8
RPR	13	13	-
	51	59	+8

(1) One of which due to age

(2) 4 of which due to age

Mr Mauroy was imprudent enough on 5 March to state that: "These elections are more representative than a poll since they constitute a real life test," and he assigned to the left the mission of conquering the majority of the General Council Presidencies. The test was not conclusive. At the risk of appearing partial, I would like to say that the beating taken by the majority was well deserved. The persistence of economic and social difficulties cannot be blamed on the present government: the crisis is still with us. But they should not have claimed that the whole trouble was due to poor management by the previous team. They were running the risk of disappointing very rapidly those who believed in the change. Rather than to speak the language of economic rigor and reason, as Jacques Delors does with talent and conviction, the government and the Socialist Party have preferred to place the question on a political basis where facts are less resistant. They have succeeded in several areas, and the account is far from being totally negative. But they have also shown a total lack of consideration for those who did not think as they did.

Self-satisfaction and emphasis are youth problems in any new majority: we experienced it in 1958 and 1974. For the socialists, long confined within the opposition, the mental reconversion was certainly difficult. But the adaptation time is passed. The time for self-commemoration*, incantation, and contempt is past. The left in power discovers realities. This should at

*What would the left have said if a stamp had been issued to commemorate Giscard d'Estaing's walk up the Champs-Elysees in May 1974 as was done to commemorate Mr Mitterrand's visit to the Pantheon on the day of his inauguration!

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least incite it to less pretention. Like its predecessors, the government discovers that not everything is possible. This is all the more reason to associate all Frenchmen, including those who do not belong to the left, to a quiet change. If it is not willing, or not yet willing, to correct the very base of its policy, the government would be well inspired to correct its style if it wants to avoid other beatings.

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POLITICAL

FRANCE

PORTUGUESE COOPERATION WITH LUSOPHONE AFRICA REVIEWED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 28 Apr 82 pp 63-66

[Text] Portugal began to develop its cooperation with the countries using Portuguese as the official language immediately after decolonization. With each state, it signed general agreements on cooperation and friendship and scientific and technical cooperation agreements. In the sociocultural area, more than a dozen agreements and protocol-annexes were signed concerning social communication, health, education, and vocational training.

The implementation of these agreements takes the form of sending short-term technical missions, or advisers, and awarding of scholarships for vocational training. The following tables show the effort invested in these three areas.

The Portuguese cooperation effort involves all the ministries, departments, and companies with appropriate specialties. It is based on knowledge of the various stages of development of African states, and the concept of mutual help in respect for sovereignty and the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of the countries concerned, and also respect for national dignity in international affairs.

This is why Portuguese-African cooperation assumes the nature not of aid or philanthropy but of solidarity and friendship.

This kind of cooperation naturally benefits from the following factors, already recognized as positive and contributing to special relationships: the common language, a common cultural heritage, the presence of human capital with a direct familiarity with the situation in the countries concerned, and the existence in Portugal of organizations specialized in tropical area studies, such as the Institute of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine and the National Laboratory for Scientific Tropical Research.

The statistics in the tables also show, beyond the mere figures, the establishment of a genuine climate of friendship and understanding which is growing irreversibly.

This climate is evident in Portugal's relations with the Portuguese-speaking African states and confirmed by frequent official visits: for example, the visits by the Portuguese president to Cape Verde, the foreign minister to Angola, and the secretary of state for foreign affairs to Mozambique. In the

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opposite direction, Portugal has received the Mozambique foreign minister, the Angola minister of industry and energy, the Cape Verde minister of justice, and the Mozambique minister of industry.

Concrete results have been achieved in development of cooperation at all levels and in all sectors. For example, there was the recent second meeting of the joint permanent cooperation commission of Portugal and Angola which established new prospects for strengthening economic and cultural relations between the two countries.

The recent visit by Luanda by the president of the Portuguese Republic was a significant expression of the will of the two peoples to develop together their economic, financial, technical, and cultural relations, which provide substance to cooperation in the reciprocal interest of both those who are giving and those who are receiving.

There is continuing attention to all aspects of cooperation: the creation and promotion of a zone of mutual expression, active and dynamic, supported by the strong elements of language and common tradition.

To this end, Portugal has set in its embassies cultural centers with basic libraries, including magazines and newspapers and record collections. The majority of the users of these centers, in addition to the advisers, of course, are the local people thus attesting to the community of roots.

Another convincing proof of the Portuguese-African cooperation is the number of grant students in Portuguese universities, at the Higher School of Music and at the Bissau Law School who are benefiting from Portuguese technical aid. The same is true at the Teachers College, which is training secondary school teachers in Cape Verde, and there is also exchange of experience and documentation in almost all areas of public administration.

Short-Term Technical Missions

<u>Country</u>	<u>Technical Projects</u>	<u>Calendar Year</u>		
		<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982*</u>
Cape Verde	Projects	21	26	3
	Participants	69	40	7
Guinea-Bissau	Projects	5	3	-
	Participants	17	12	2
Sao Tome and Principe	Projects	6	5	-
	Participants	9	8	-
Angola	Projects	2	2	-
	Participants	3	5	-
Mozambique	Projects	3	4	1
	Participants	6	28	2
Total	Projects	37	40	4
	Participants	104	93	11

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Advisers Sent

<u>Country</u>	<u>Sector of Activity</u>	<u>Years</u>		
		<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82*</u>
Cape Verde	Teaching	27	27	26
	Health	1	4	1
	Miscellaneous	5	5	3
	Total	33	36	30
Guinea-Bissau	Teaching	103	92	38
	Health	2	11	6
	Miscellaneous	23	6	6
	Total	128	109	50
Sao Tome and Principe	Teaching	45	23	26
	Health	3	1	1
	Miscellaneous	4	2	1
	Total	52	26	28
Angola	Teaching	385	380	90
	Health	-	-	-
	Miscellaneous	-	-	-
	Total	385	380	90
Mozambique	Teaching	18	70	130
	Health	4	5	2
	Miscellaneous	2	4	-
	Total	24	79	132
Total	Teaching	578	592	310
	Health	10	21	10
	Miscellaneous	34	17	10
	Total	622	630	330

Study Grants and Vocational Training

<u>Country</u>	<u>School Year</u>	<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82*</u>
Cape Verde	Available	270	270	270
	Used	207	188	197
Guinea-Bissau	Available	270	290	290
	Used	149	203	105
Sao Tome and Principe	Available	150	170	170
	Used	128	104	109
Angola	Available	50	70	70
	Used	7	7	23

[continued]

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[Study Grants and Vocational Training--continued]

<u>Country</u>	<u>School Year</u>	<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82*</u>
Mozambique	Available	50	70	70
	Used	0	0	1
Total	Available	790	870	870
	Used	491	502	525

*As of 1 March 1982

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POLITICAL

NETHERLANDS

LEADERSHIP DEBATE IN LABOR PARTY VIEWED

Amsterdam VRIJ NEDERLAND in Dutch 5 Jun 82 p 3

[Article by J. van Tijn and Max van Weezel]

[Text] While he was still applauded in Tiel, the leader knew better. In a secret session his ministerial colleagues rejected him as leader, and the leadership of the parliamentary delegation also left him in the lurch. There were reasons for the fact that the party leadership still wanted him. For the first time in 16 years he was not thinking for himself but was forced. A description of 10 days of drama in which the PvdA [Labor Party] as one man deserted Den Uyl.

No politician gets his handkerchief out as quickly and unexpectedly during a speech as Joop den Uyl. In the middle of a sentence the speaker reaches sure-handedly into his right pocket, out of which a small model tea cloth appears. In the middle of a word he thrusts the cloth under his nose, and while, half stifled, he finishes the sentence, he blows his nose loudly and haphazardly once or twice. In one motion he then finishes the sentence and hides the cloth away again.

It happened again Monday morning [31 May] in the auction hall at Tiel, and perhaps that was the last time. Not that the speaker himself seemed to be inclined that way, but toward the back of the hall the party members, Second Chamber members, and former cabinet ministers came to feel that it was really all over. It was a family party; the Shakespeare family was there in great numbers. Macbeth and wife were there, and Polonius and his stepson Hamlet, not to forget Caesar, Mark Antony, Cassius, and Brutus. One big family, united around the great leader, who has worn the face of the socialist party for 16 years now. A tired face, anxious and tight-lipped under an array of flowers that one might expect to see in Aalsmeer rather than in Tiel. "Smile, Joop, damn it," he was told on his way to the speaker's platform, and sure enough, he did raise one corner of his mouth. That was it for the time being, until he really had to, for the photographers and the party television camera.

Here the families from Tiel, Echteld, and Beesd had to sit and wait for hours. They had sighed under the loudspeaker volume from popular orchestras and lady vocalists who at the last moment had come after all. A month ago when the organizing committee began arranging this answer to the CDA [Christian

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Democratic Appeal] festivities in Bossche and other cattle-market halls, at that very moment Minister Van der Louw announced a considerable cutback in the budget for the arts. That almost represented the *coup de grâce* for the family celebration at Tiel. No artist could decently appear before such an anti-arts organization as the Labor Party. Performers who ordinarily make no bones about adorning the personnel evenings of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy or the Royal Middle Class Union suddenly refused to appear. Only the VARA [Workers Radio Amateurs Association] dance orchestra and Gregor Serban's orchestra showed that they had their heart in the right place. Then, thank God, two weeks ago the cabinet fell, and since performing artists are not always long-term political thinkers ("Van der Louw is out, so the cutbacks won't go through") a number of them were ready to serve the cause of socialism.

So then Joop den Uyl spoke before an audience of several thousand. Up to tempo from the beginning, even more hurried than usual. He polemicized once more against the interim cabinet, against the KVP [(former) Catholic People's Party], against the D'66 [Democrats of '66]; even hinted that the bombs falling on Iran and Iraq, the absurdist war in the Falklands, and the slowness of the negotiations in Geneva were all to be blamed on the PvdA's not being in the government, but soon, fortunately, arrived at the ones that are really to blame for everything: the New Right in America and Europe. As so often before, his jokes had no time for a point--there was one about cycling: "I do not ride a bicycle, at least not on the road, at least not in public; this is the last time I am going to talk about cycling, and I do not want to hear any more about it," and he had thought up a rather unusual closing. A bit out of character, perhaps, but it came out: "We must not promise more than we can make good on!"

The politicians, in the back of the hall with their hands in their pockets like judges at an old-fashioned horse fair, had all heard it all before, but the other 2,500 could not get enough of it. When Joop den Uyl says: "It is not true that income distribution has become stale and flat. Not a bit of it! Just look around you!" even that is an experience for Tiel. And when the gray-headed leader talks about unemployment as "that assault on human dignity," when he says that "socialism is a productive movement," but most of all when, half overcome by his own emotions and rhetoric, he declares: "In principle unemployment is a solvable problem, and so we will have to find the social means to solve it!" there is nobody that seems able to match him.

Den Uyl knows that his position within the party leadership is open to a great deal of doubt. The party leader is aware that there are those within that leadership who are attacking that position with force, if only because they see in themselves or in a friend a better candidate. But he will not let his people--or the microphones that are listening in, or the eager cameras of "Sonja on Monday"--notice that.

Self-Pity

Just an hour later Den Uyl abandoned himself to an unusual form of self-pity, in the intimate circle of party secretariat workers and aspiring party leaders. They were saying good-bye to Kees Bode, the publicity man who has directed the PvdA campaigns for 10 years, a thing that to Mayor Peper of Rotterdam was no reason not to take him off to Rotterdam as an adviser. In a parting word Joop

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den Uyl referred to the last, catastrophic chamber elections in which they had worked together. "Last time it did not go well," the former minister of social affairs and employment said, "but that was my fault, not Kees's." Very special insiders knew that he was alluding to the words that the campaign leader addressed to the former standard-bearer last spring in a small group: "Joop, it is not intended personally, but I cannot stay with you any longer." The atmosphere was most cordial. Whereas at similar CDA gatherings there is sometimes a penetrating smell of the wild-animal cages at the Amsterdam Zoo, here in the café Graaf Adolf (which is still in favor) at Tiel there was the free and easy atmosphere of a widely ramified Sicilian family assembled en masse in the notary's antechamber before the interment of the beloved head of the family.

There was one thing that concerned all those present and bound them together as seldom before: what decision would Joop den Uyl finally make? Would he stay on to save the party? Or would he leave to save the party? Would it be a disaster for the party if he left? Or would it be a disaster if he remained? Tuesday afternoon [1 June] a radio commentator put the question to Marcel van Dam, minister of housing and land management in the second Van Agt cabinet. Van Dam, who has in common with Dries van Agt, Erik Jurgens, Ed Nijpels, Hans van Mierlo, Ruud Lubbers, and Piet Steenkamp the fact among others that he studied under the Jesuits or a competing order, answered: "Whatever decision Den Uyl makes, a decision by him can never be a disaster for the PvdA."

One of those who were not sure a week ago what decision he must make was Joop den Uyl himself. In what have undoubtedly been the worst 10 days of his career, he was given notice on all sides in his party that his time was up. Friday there was a dramatic meeting--one of a series--at which the six socialist ministers from the last cabinet were assembled, together with Wim Meijer, leader of the parliamentary delegation. A comparison with the Last Supper seems far-fetched--but although the number of guests is not right, and the table manners of some of those present were faulty--it is, nevertheless, strikingly apt.

There they sat, gathered around the leader. Max van der Stoep, Den Uyl's faithful comrade in arms for 20 years; Ed. van Thijn, for years voluntarily the man behind Den Uyl, contriver and executor of campaigns, strategist, his successor as leader of the parliamentary delegation, and one who, like him, broke into national politics via the Amsterdam council; Jos van Kemenade, one of the ministerial candidates because of whom the last cabinet almost was not formed, a protégé of Den Uyl's because of his origin, toughness, and unfeigned socialist sentiment; André van der Louw, sent by Den Uyl to Rotterdam and summoned back from Rotterdam, regarded as crown prince for the last 10 years, thus surviving other crown princes like André Kloos and Wim Duisenberg; and, lastly, Marcel van Dam.

Every one of these gentlemen had a great deal to thank the party leader for. In every case their careers had been determined by him, and they knew it. But they also realized that they in turn had contributed much to the luster of his career. Some more than others, all of them had at some time served as a shield for Den Uyl, to the left or to the right. Some were real friends--insofar as that is possible in politics and with Den Uyl--and all were comrades.

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They all said that afternoon and evening, in a session that was so dramatic that those present solemnly promised each other not to let it leak out where the meeting took place, when, who was present, or even that such a meeting had taken place; they all said to Den Uyl that it would be better if he decided not to be the standard-bearer again in the coming elections. The arguments differed. They varied from lack of power to attract voters due to insufficient leadership given to the party, to such a solo performance within the cabinet that he would be an obstacle to any renewed participation of the PvdA in the government.

It may perhaps be assumed that during the dramatic session there were threats by certain ones that they would no longer be available for certain jobs if Den Uyl should decide to lead the party in Second Chamber elections for the sixth time. Den Uyl must have been greatly hurt, especially by the unanimity of the judgment, which, by the way, seems to have been expressed in what was called great friendship.

Joop den Uyl had already been painfully surprised that morning during his hastily swallowed breakfast. The morning papers "TROUW and DE VOLKSKRANT both started their front pages with the report that the PvdA parliamentary delegation no longer had confidence in Den Uyl as standard-bearer.

And it was essentially true: from remarks by members of the delegation office--the executive committee of the delegation, including in addition to Meijer such politicians as Van der Hek, De Vries, and Castricum--Den Uyl must have retained the impression that he had better not be the standard-bearer again in the coming elections.

In short, the party leadership was deserting Den Uyl to a man.

That is to say, except for the party committee, even if only because this second highest organ of the party--between congresses the very highest--has not yet devoted a meeting to the question. Chairman Max van den Berg has had a number of conversations with Den Uyl in which he seems to have advised the latter to carry the standard one more time. Other members of the executive committee, too--Deputy Chairman Poppe, Party Secretary Van Velzen, and his deputy Rottenberg--have also spoken with Den Uyl in the past week, and it was pointed out in the conversations that while Den Uyl has the support of the committee, a decision to remain available does not in itself solve the leadership problem for the longer run. For if the former prime minister should decide to step down sooner or later after the elections--a notion he flirted with on the "Red Rooster" TV program last Saturday--it would be the parliamentary delegation that would have to decide on his successor and not the party. It was thus not pure loyalty to Den Uyl that reminded the members of the executive committee of their duties. Den Uyl must have understood the hint well; like others, he feels the anxiety of Van den Berg and some other members of the party committee about the rise of André van der Louw. And his unfortunate statement that he would rather not go back to the Second Chamber because his earlier term in parliament was not the happiest time of his life? They do not see even in that a guarantee that Van der Louw would not still, perhaps at the eleventh hour, get himself reelected to the Chamber. In that case he would be the strongest candidate for the succession.

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In the VVD [People's Party for Freedom and Democracy] the leader is ordinarily selected by his predecessor; in the CDA the current leader designates himself as successor. In the PvdA the politicians appeared paralyzed. Ed. van Thijn, crown prince for years, has twice been second on lists behind the respective favorites, but ruled himself out. Jos van Kemenade, enthusiastically cheered in September of last year at the PvdA congress that allowed the ministers to participate in the cabinet, let it be known that he has no interest in the cabinet. Marcel van Dam, popular in large voter circles, made himself expressly unavailable.

It must not be considered out of the question for long that some of the above, including Van der Louw, would accept the leadership if one simple condition were met. They would like to be asked as officially as possible in the name of the party.

There is one man thus far who has more or less received such an offer. A man whom Den Uyl has thought of for years as his successor, but the very one who in the eyes of some in the party leadership undermined Joop den Uyl and gave the Christian Democrats the excuse to effect Joop's destruction. Wim Kok.

When we ask the FNV [Netherlands Trade Unions Federation] chairman precisely who has approached him and when, we run into an interesting linguistic question. Where does the approach begin in such a case, at what point does approaching change into sounding out, and when does the moment arrive that we can calmly speak of "asking"? Since we cannot settle that, we let Kok himself deal with it.

"Max van den Berg has not approached me," he says. "He did ask me whether in certain cases I would be prepared in principle to play a rôle in politics."

Kok has had a busy week with the gentlemen of the Labor Party. When he got home Sunday evening last week from a business trip abroad he was telephoned by Stan Poppe, member of the Second Chamber and deputy chairman of the PvdA, who wanted to know whether he could go round to see Kok. A time was set for later in the week; the conversation was to be on what wishes the FNV might have with regard to the future PvdA campaign platform.

The next day, Monday, two prominent PvdA'ers called up: Den Uyl and Van den Berg. Den Uyl said it was urgent and went over to Kok's place the same evening (after a speaking engagement in Zaanstreek). Kok says: "Well, why not at my place? The house was free, the coffee was hot, we did not talk about the party leadership. Joop did say that he was preparing to make his decision."

The next day Chairman Van den Berg showed up at Kok's house--again the house was free, again the coffee was hot, but this time, Kok admits, the talk was about the position of standard-bearer. Kok says that he explained to Van den Berg that only a short time before he had tied himself up with the FNV for another 3-year term as chairman. That only very weighty arguments could get him away from that. "We are suggesting the possibility that Den Uyl will make it known that he is no longer available, after which the still controversial and vacillating Van der Louw would be considered to succeed him. Would that be a weighty reason for Kok to ask the FNV to release him from his promise?"

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Kok, now violently: "Oh, no, nothing of the kind! In the first place I am not going to philosophize with you about who all would be in a position to follow Den Uyl. If Den Uyl does not continue and another candidate's position is not very good within the party, I do not have to be the man whose position is less difficult. In principle my answer is an ironclad no."

Later, too, he says: "My heart is in the trade union movement. I have worked there for 21 years. Naturally I have loyalty to the Labor Party, too; I am a member of the PvdA, and that sometimes creates a lot of problems, as we see here again. But if in the party Jantje finds that he cannot work with Pietje and Pietje finds that he cannot do anything with Jantje, I have nothing to do with that." There almost seems to be a certain abhorrence when he adds: "It is a whole different world. Although I do know those ministers and members of parliament, I find it almost impossible to imagine that I would take that step. I can imagine that they would cook that up to make a new start with the trade union movement after all that has happened, but if my possible service as a standard-bearer has to guarantee the pro-union attitude of the Labor Party, I think: now, now, that is a very fragile thing, you know."

It is not the most usual way of soliciting the leadership of the Labor Party, but soliciting is not exactly what Wim Kok is doing. There is the promise to the FNV (where within the foreseeable future such mainstays as Herman Bode and Frans Drabbe will also retire). Moreover, he has no certainty about Den Uyl's decision. For that reason he will not (be able to) regard Van den Berg's offer as too official.

And to some extent that is Van der Louw's position as well. It is true that to some extent he is supported by some of his former ministerial colleagues, but they are keeping quiet at least until Den Uyl has made his decision. On the other hand he knows that Van den Berg and some of the committee would not like to see him get in. That has to do with his strange escapades with (especially) the youth unemployment solutions that he trotted out as minister, especially in the opinion of part of the party cadre. It does not look attractive to start out in the leadership without a united party, and thus perhaps spend 4 years in the opposition. Moreover, he seems to be playing with the notion of succeeding Maarten Vrolijk next year as the Queen's Commissioner [i.e., governor] of South Holland (which seems at present to be the absolute end for successful politicians in their forties).

And so the situation at the beginning of the week was: an interested waiting, two potential successors who did not really want it--unless they had assurance of support in the party--and a leader who is thinking it over.

And so we are waiting again for him to decide, as we have for the last 16 years.

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